

Malaysia



A Business Day supplement for Tourism Malaysia

26 February 2001

**Revisiting
Kuala
Lumpur**

Page 5

**Hosting
the world**

Page 7

**Good
connections**

Page 8

**A great
place
to be**

Page 3

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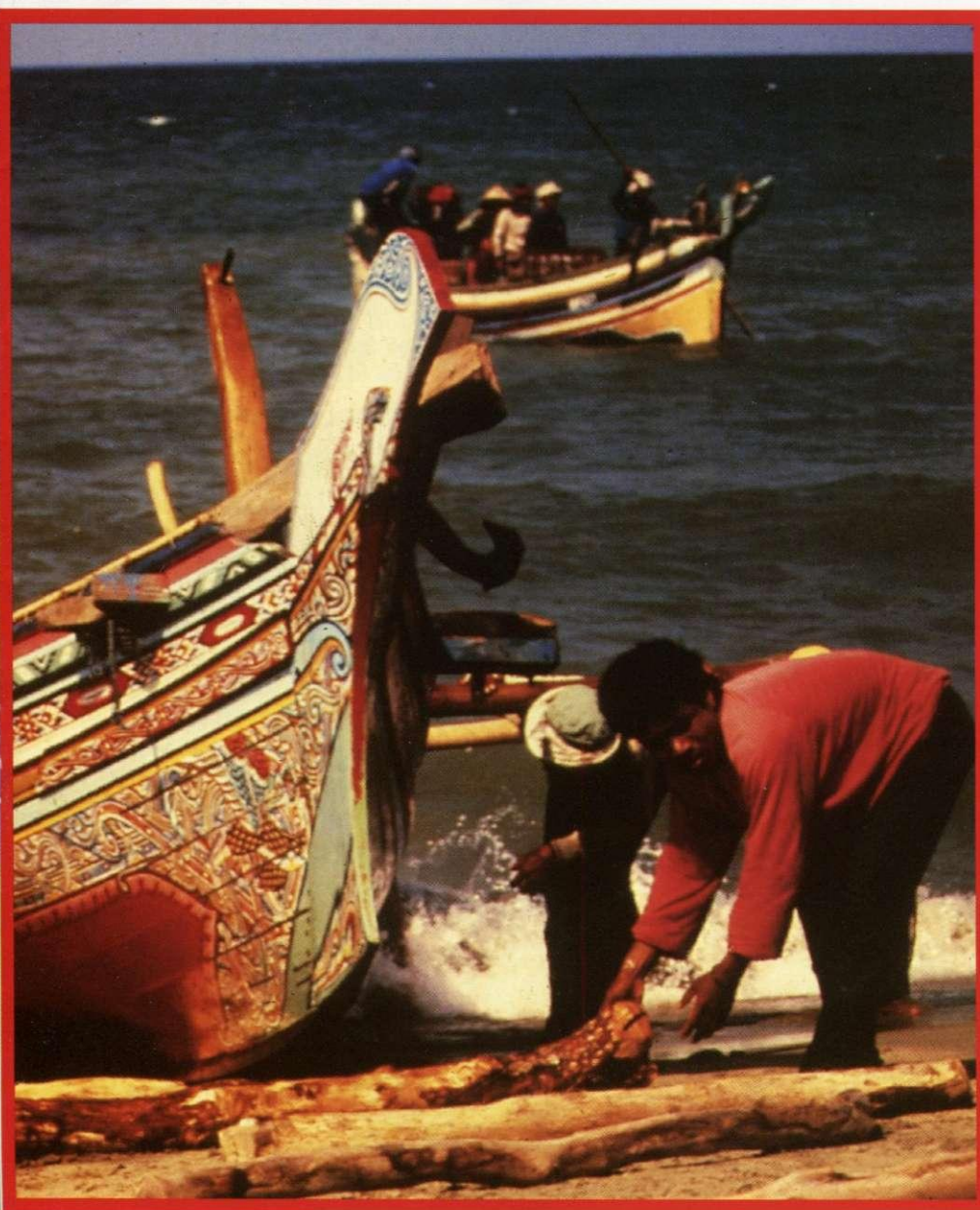


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A great place to be

*Malaysia is where the modern world and the mystery of the Orient merge.
It is a true paradise for tourists, at prices everyone can afford.*



WHAT makes exotic Malaysia a fabulous travel destination? The freedom to travel anywhere, anytime without any hassle. And in a relatively safe way and inexpensively, too.

Visitors to fun-filled Malaysia will find that travelling from one point to another is easy.

Just step out of your hotel and you can get either an air-conditioned coach, limousine or taxi. Flag them down and you'll be on way to any exciting destination.

If you prefer to venture out on foot, that's easy too. It's safe to walk about in any of the cities, suburbs or resorts in Malaysia. It's problem-free.

Even during the wee hours of the morning when you feel like having a cup of coffee at a sidewalk cafe or nipping over to the 24-hour convenience store for some snacks, it's perfectly safe to wander out. It's as simple as that.

Malaysia, of late, has been in the international spotlight because of the regional financial turbulence and the country's political metamorphosis.

But the Malaysian government has taken several positive measures to tackle the crisis head on and to lift the economy out of the doldrums. These include the imposition of selective exchange controls to limit excessive currency manipulation where the import of the local currency, the ringgit, is limited to 1,000 per person.

But there are no restrictions on other currencies: you can bring in or take out any amount. So the exchange controls do not really affect tourists. Given that exchange controls will also effect greater stability in exchange rate movements, this translates into fewer headaches for foreign travelers to Malaysia.

Since exchange controls do not affect the interchangeability of foreign

Malaysia's east coast is blessed with golden beaches and world-class resorts.

currency into local currency and vice versa, holiday-makers can easily change their cash at any money-changer or bank.

When you are in Malaysia your visit will not be complete without putting your feet on its clean white sandy beaches or spending a night at one of the resorts facing either the South China Sea or the Straits of Melaka.

Situated in the heart of South-East Asia, getting to Malaysia is easy. Over 40 airlines fly into the country from various parts of the world.

In addition, Malaysia Airlines, the country's flag carrier, has a global network. Malaysia also has a world class land transport network with state roads, federal roads and highways.

Langkawi is the largest island in a cluster of 99, renowned for their beaches and world class resorts. On the coastline of the duty free island lie the idyllic beaches of Datai, Pantai Kok, Burau Bay and Pantai Tengah.

Penang is fondly referred to as The Pearl Of The Orient and on the coastal road north of the island is a stretch of golden beaches with world-class resorts.

The most famous beach in Penang is Batu Ferringi, a low-lying area with sweeping strands and casuarinas.

In Perak, Pangkor Island and Lumut are two areas with beautiful beaches. In Negeri Sembilan, Port Dickson has one of the longest beaches in Malaysia, offering holiday-makers ample room to frolic and have fun in the sun.

The historical city of Melaka is also famous for its beaches. Tanjung Bidara, 35km north of Melaka town, is one of Melaka's popular beach resorts.

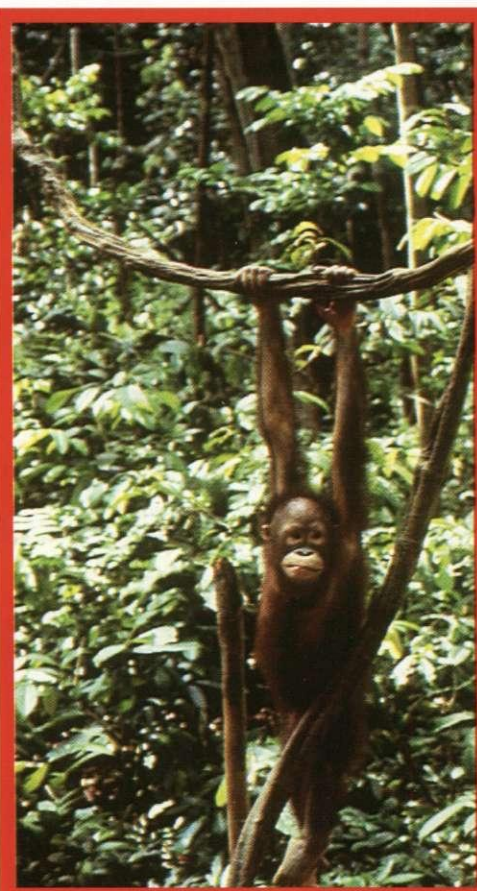
Pahang is another state in Peninsular Malaysia famous for its beaches and Tioman Island and Cherating are the most popular and famous among holiday-makers local and foreign.

Terengganu, on the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, is one state truly blessed with a wealth of charming landscapes and natural wonders. It is a haven for divers. Its 225km coastline of white sandy beaches, quaint fishing villages, captivating offshore islands and aquamarine waters makes it a great holiday destination.

Sabah and Sarawak – home of the world's oldest rainforest – is another "must visit" location in Malaysia. The two neighboring states are situated on the Northeast coast of Borneo Island and separated from the peninsula by the South China Sea.

Sarawak, the largest state in Malaysia, is inhabited by around 26 different ethnic groups, each with their own beliefs, traditions, and customs.

For a visitor who has interest in culture, the Sarawak Cultural Village is the place to visit. The village is aptly



See the orangutans in Borneo when you visit Sabah and Sarawak.

described as the "living museum" with seven full-sized replicas of longhouses and other buildings representing all of Sarawak's major ethnic groups.

Sarawak is the perfect destination for anyone with an interest in nature. The state owns a network of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries which provide protection for unique ecosystems. Some of Sarawak's natural attractions are located underground. See spectacular limestone caves systems of world famous Mulu and Niah dating back some 30,000 years. The world's largest cave passage, the world's largest natural rock chamber and the longest cave system in South-East Asia are all found at Mulu.

Sabah is more for those who yearn for real adventure. The rugged and adventurous join the ultimate 4WD adventure incorporating some of the toughest off-road terrain in the world.

For scuba divers, Sipadan Island offers some of the finest scuba diving in the world while Pulau Layang-Layang stands as the "diving mecca" of South-East Asia. One can also visit Tunku Abdul Rahman Park, the best place to learn scuba diving.

Mount Kinabalu is the pride and soul of Sabah. It is cherished as one of the highest peaks in South-East Asia, towering 4,101 metres above a tangle of mountains.●

Welcome to the airport in the forest

THE Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA, right) in Sepang was officially opened in June 1998. Dubbed the "airport of the 21st century" due to its state-of-the-art facilities and savvy technology, it is among the world's largest.

KLIA was completed in four and a half years of round-the-clock construction with a workforce that reached 25,000 at its peak, taking less than half the time normally required to complete an airport of its design, engineering and sophistication.

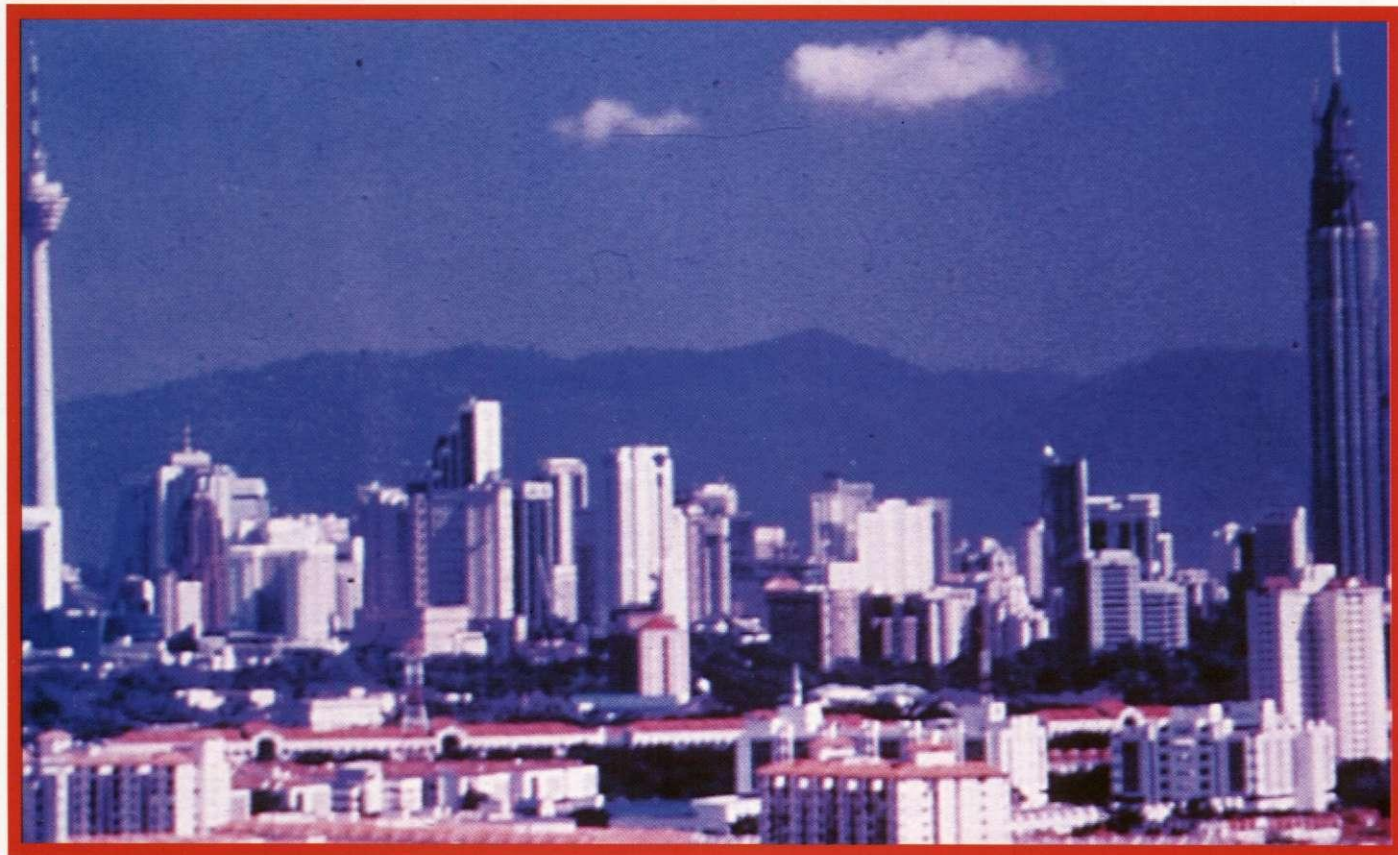
Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa designed this sleek airport, but the "chief architect" was none other than Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Often described as the "airport in the forest, forest in the airport," KLIA is not just an airport.

As Dr Mahathir puts it: "It is a piece of art, dedicated to beauty as well as the environment. It relates to the greenness and the forests of Malaysia, both inside and outside."●



Revisiting Kuala Lumpur



There is always something new and refreshing about Kuala Lumpur each time you come back to visit.

COMING back to Kuala Lumpur, the federal capital of Malaysia, is like visiting an old friend who gets more exciting and better looking with age. Truth is, there's always something new and refreshing about the city each time you come back.

New landmarks to see, such as the world's tallest buildings, the Petronas Twin Towers; new shopping malls to pack in some shopping; new restaurants to wine and dine in; new night spots for entertainment and new, international hotels to check into.

Kuala Lumpur, or KL as Malaysians like to call it, is in fact a young city that started as a mining settlement in the late 1800s with the discovery of tin at the confluence of the Klang and Gombak rivers.

The drive from the KL International Airport in Sepang to Kuala Lumpur via modern urban highways is also a prelude to the dynamic city of Kuala Lumpur, the pulse of the nation and home to more

than 1.5 million people of different ethnic groups, mostly young.

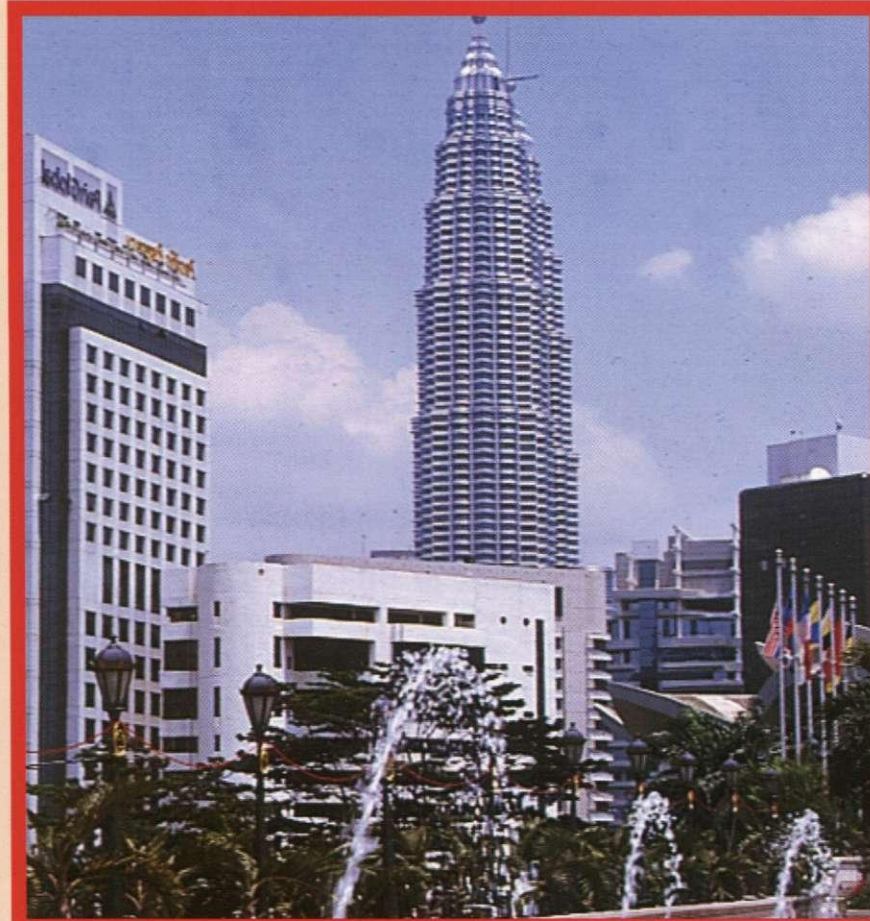
Yet, in the midst of all that is new, including the elevated LRT (light rail transport) system weaving through the city, are historical landmarks such as the Sultan Abdul Samad building, and cultural landmarks such as Chinatown and Little India, that provide an old world charm that many other modern cities lack. Active conservation has led to the preservation of several old buildings of architectural merit, adding interest and character to the city. And, yes, if visitors should prefer the familiar hotels of the '70s and '80s, they are still here, refurbished to reflect the trends of the new century.

Kuala Lumpur Tower, a 515-metre-above-sea-level telecommunications tower on Bukit (Hill) Nanas, is the venue of the annual KL Towerthon, an international sports event. The tower has a revolving restaurant and a viewing gallery at the top for a panoramic view of

the city. It is the highest telecommunications tower in Asia and the fourth highest in the world.

At Dataran Merdeka (Merdeka Square) on Jalan Raja Laut, the Union Jack was lowered at midnight on August 31 1957 and independence proclaimed. At one end of the manicured lawn flies the Malaysian flag atop a 100-metre tall flagpole (reputed to be the tallest in the world). Near it is an ornamental fountain that was ordered from England and assembled locally in 1897.

At the other end is St Mary's Anglican Church, of early English Gothic style, and consecrated in 1895. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain attended service at the church when she was in the city to officially close the 23rd Commonwealth Games in 1998. On the west side of the lawn is the, Royal Selangor Club, founded in 1884 as a social and cricket club for the expatriate community and housed in a mock Tudor-style building originally built in



Twin Towers offer a view of the future

GREETING visitors as they enter the city and dominating the skyline is Kuala Lumpur's most famous new landmark, the 88-storey Petronas Twin Towers (left).

The world's tallest buildings at 452 metres above street level, the Petronas Twin Towers are located at Kuala Lumpur city centre, at the intersection of Jalan Ampang and Jalan P. Ramlee.

In the podium of the Petronas Twin Towers is the Petronas Philharmonic Hall, the first in Malaysia, the Petronas Art Gallery and Petrosains, an interactive exhibition centre. For an elevated view of the city, the skybridge at the 41st floor of the Petronas Twin Towers is now open to the public from Tuesdays to Sundays.

The Petronas Twin Towers house several multimedia companies as they serve as the beginning of the country's Multimedia Super Corridor.

Adjacent to the Petronas Twin Towers is the Suria KLCC, one of the newest malls, offering a host of international and local labels, department stores, specialty stores, restaurants and fast food outlets. ●

1910. Overlooking Dataran Merdeka is one of the most famous landmarks of Kuala Lumpur - the grand Sultan Abdul Samad Building, a two-floor brick building with a 40-metre high central clock tower topped with a copper dome. Completed in 1897, it used to house the colonial government departments but is now the seat of the Supreme and High Courts of Malaysia. In this precinct too are the National History Museum, housed in a 1909 building, and the Kuala Lumpur Memorial Library, occupying a 1899 building (both at the south end). At the north end, at the intersection of Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Jalan Tun Perak, are the Old City Hall building (1904), the Old Survey Department Building (1910) and the Old High Court Building (1915), which now houses the Sessions and Magistrates Courts.

From Dataran Merdeka, visitors can see the 35-storey Dayabumi Complex, with its Moorish-Byzantine architecture and white fretwork. Completed in 1984, it houses the General Post Office, shops and offices. A short walk up the road is Masjid Negara (National Mosque) which is of contemporary design, with a 73-metre minaret, a marble courtyard and a hall that accommodates 10,000

worshippers. Opposite the mosque is the Islamic Arts Museum.

Nearby is the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station, another famous landmark of Moorish design built in 1910. This beautiful building features arches, two 30-metre high domes, seven minarets and an iron roof. Facing the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station are the offices of Malayan Railway, housed in a building of similar design.

Exploring the old core of the city is probably best done by walking. At the back of the Dayabumi Complex is a bridge over the Klang River leading to a two-floor Art Deco building, the Central Market, a former fresh produce market turned into popular tourist and local haunt for souvenirs, arts, crafts and local foodstuff. A short walk along the riverside promenade is Masjid (Mosque) Jamek, situated at the confluence of the Klang and Gombak rivers. Completed in 1909, the city's oldest surviving mosque sits in picturesque harmony with some of the tower blocks of modern Kuala Lumpur. (This site can also be reached via Jalan Tun Perak from the northern end of Dataran Merdeka.)

Between Central Market and Masjid Jamek is Market Square (Medan Pasar),

the site of the original township of Kuala Lumpur. Interesting aspects here include the Art Deco Clock Tower erected in 1937 to commemorate the coronation of Britain's King George VI, and commercial buildings built between 1909 and 1938 featuring art deco, Dutch, Islamic and English influences.

To the east of Central Market is Chinatown. The shops here sell a wide variety of products associated with the Chinese community, including gold jewellery, textiles, clothing and shoes, Chinese herbs, dried and fresh food products, books, hardware, and haberdashery. Jalan Petaling has a wet market, numerous fruit stalls, a small day bazaar and a larger night bazaar when the street is closed to traffic. Tourist attractions include Flower Street near the market, the Kwong Siew Association Building (constructed in 1888 and restored in 1995), the Chan See Shu Yuen Association Building, constructed in 1906 in Chinese temple-style, the elaborate Hindu Sri Maha Mariamman Temple and the Old High Street Police Station.

Here too are several buildings in attractive period architecture, such as the Yan Keng Benevolent Dramatic

Association Building on Jalan Sultan, recognisable from the beautiful classical arches on the ground floor.

A popular place to buy batik and Malay clothing, Indian merchandise, such as sarees, jewellery, textiles, spices and perfumes, is Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman (Jalan TAR) and the Jalan Masjid area, popularly known as Little India (a short walk from Dataran Merdeka). During Ramadhan, the fasting month for Muslims, and a week or two before the Hindu New Year of Deepavali, Jalan Masjid is turned into a street bazaar. A tourist attraction is Masjid India (India Mosque) which began as a wooden structure in 1863. The present building, in southern Indian style, was built in 1964.

Historically, the property owners and traders along Jalan TAR were an ethnically diverse group, and this is still evident today. The shops along the road sell an assortment of items including pianos, electrical appliances, sports goods, luggage, carpets and Chinese curios. One of the most famous and beloved landmarks of Kuala Lumpur is probably the Coliseum Cafe built in 1921. An early guest of this once-popular watering hotel for colonial planters, miners and traders was the English author Somerset Maugham. With its unchanged decor and furnishing, the atmosphere of yesteryear has been retained.

Shopping in Kuala Lumpur is a

fascinating experience. Apart from the bewildering range of products, the visitor has a choice of shopping in air conditioned malls, department stores, hypermarkets, specialty stores, duty-free shops, arcades, bazaars and night markets (pasar malam). Popular tourist items include duty free products, electrical appliances, clothing, sportswear, batik, pewter and jewellery.

The main shopping precincts or complexes in the city include Jalan Bukit Bintang where Starhill, Lot 10, Sungei Wang Plaza, Bukit Bintang Plaza and BB Park are located; Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman where Sogo department store and Pertama Complex are found; Suria KLCC, Ampang Park Shopping Complex and City Square in Jalan Ampang; Jalan Petaling, and the Jalan Cheng Lock area (part of Chinatown) where Kota Raya, S&M Plaza, Sinarkota (Metrojaya department store) are situated.

As a cosmopolitan city, Kuala Lumpur offers a truly gastronomic experience. Malaysian cuisine comprises three main groups – Malay, Chinese and Indian – each having its own distinct style of cooking. The unique *Nyonya* or Peranakan cuisine, a fusion of Chinese and Malay cooking styles, and Indian Muslim fare are also very popular.

Most hotels serve lunch or dinner buffets featuring a mix of Malaysian and international dishes. Chinese, Indian, Japanese and Thai restaurants are plentiful. There are also many

restaurants serving Western, Italian and Mediterranean fare, particularly in some of the shopping complexes, in Jalan Sultan Ismail, Jalan P. Ramlee, Jalan Ampang, Jalan Bukit Bintang and the city suburb of Bangsar Baru.

These same streets also boast entertainment venues. Bangsar Baru, Bintang Walk (from the JW Marriott to Lot 10 on Jalan Bukit Bintang), Ampang Walk on Jalan Ampang, Suria KLCC and Jalan P. Ramlee have numerous cafes, bistros and pubs.

Visitors love Kuala Lumpur because it is truly a city that never sleeps. As dusk falls on a day's work or a day filled with sightseeing, the lights come on and city folk come out to dine, often alfresco, or fill up the coffee bars. Malls are open till 10pm for late night shopping and the night bazaars come alive, providing great entertainment even if you are not buying. And as the theatre or disco crowd spills out in the wee hours, there is always a 24-hour restaurant to adjourn to.

Travelling around the city is easy as taxis are plentiful, although it is best to avoid travelling during peak hours.

Brochures on the Kuala Lumpur Heritage Trails – Dataran Merdeka, Jalan TAR, Market Square and Chinatown – provide a comprehensive and informative guide to walking around the historical parts of the city. Brochures are available from Tourism Malaysia offices and Tourist Information Centres. ●

MALAYSIA has world-class facilities and a successful track record of hosting prestigious international conventions, exhibitions and sports events. For Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) planners, Malaysia offers a choice of venues in city, island or mountain locations.

Malaysia is a choice Asia-Pacific destination for international MICE events. It has world-class purpose-built MICE venues, numerous hotels with MICE facilities throughout the country, frequent and convenient international flight accessibility, modern infrastructure, a well-developed internal transportation system, trained English-speaking tourism professionals and support staff, and a sophisticated telecommunication system.

Fully capable of hosting large-scale international conferences, exhibitions and other events, Malaysia has successfully won the bids to host several major international conventions in the next few years, including the 89th

Malaysia: Hosting the world

World Dental Congress and the 50th PATA Conference in 2001, and both the World Orchid Conference and the 53rd FIABC World Congress in 2002.

Malaysia put in a bid to host the Asian Games in 2006 but lost to dark horse Qatar. It is also bidding for the Federation of International Gynaecological and Obstetrical (FIGO) World Congress, also in 2006. Of the six premier purpose-built MICE venues in the country, four are located in the Kuala Lumpur-Petaling Jaya area and one each in Langkawi Island and the Genting Highlands.

The Putra World Trade Centre has 35,000 sqm of exhibition space, one plenary hall, two multipurpose halls, 17 meeting rooms, a press conference room and VIP suites. There are three exhibition halls (Tun Razak Halls 1, 3 and 4), a large outdoor space to handle tented exhibitions and a foyer area, the Legar Putra.

Chief executive officer of the PWTC N.S. Pichoo says: "The PWTC has superb facilities and services, including up-to-date telecommunication and audio-visual facilities and a fibre optic backbone, which allows for simultaneous Internet access for up to 3,000 users. There is also continuous upgrading of the halls and facilities."

Pichoo emphasises accessibility and experience. "Unlike our competitors, the PWTC, by virtue of its central location within the heart of Kuala Lumpur city, is easily accessible to the public via major roads and public transportation – buses, taxis, LRT trains, and commuter trains. This accessibility ensures good turnout for all events held at the PWTC," he says. ●

Good connections

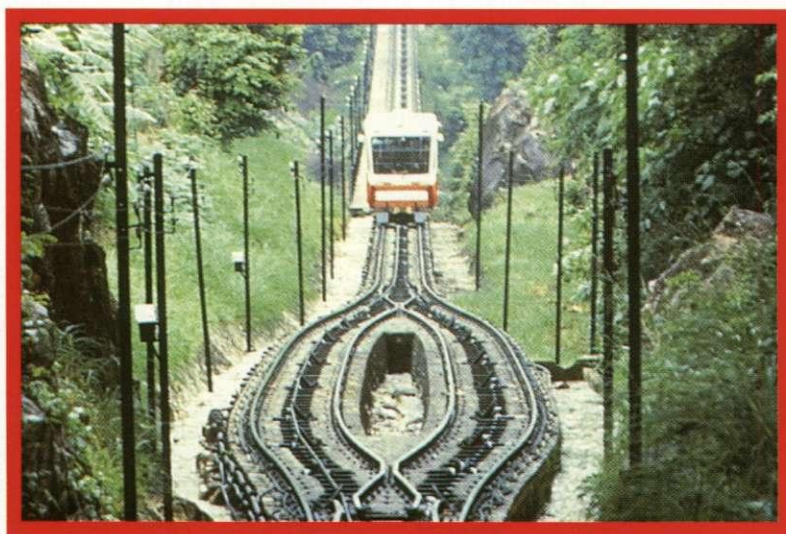
MALAYSIA has excellent air, road and rail networks for internal travel. From all the main entry points in Peninsular Malaysia, there are direct flights, highway accessibility and train connections to key cities and towns. Flight services from Kota Kinabalu and Kuching link these two cities to the peninsula and to smaller towns within the states of Sabah and Sarawak.

Travelling in Malaysia is convenient, as the country enjoys a modern transportation infrastructure, and visitors have a choice of air, road or rail transport. From the main entry points of Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Alor Setar, Johor Bahru and Kota Bharu, there are Malaysia Airlines flights to the key cities and state capitals of the country. Kuala Lumpur is also the base for commercial or chartered flights operated by smaller airlines.

Inbound visitors who land in Kota Kinabalu in Sabah and Kuching in Sarawak can also conveniently fly to destinations in Peninsular Malaysia, or connect on to Malaysia Airlines flights to smaller towns within these two states.

Peninsular Malaysia is also well-traversed by highways and tarred Federal

The funicular railway in Penang is one of many transport options in Malaysia



A hotel to suit every taste

IN 1957, when the then Malaya obtained its independence from Britain, there were only two hotels of international standard in the country – the Merlin, now known as the Concorde, and the Federal – both in Kuala Lumpur. Today, Malaysia boasts a wide portfolio of hotels of different categories, many of them world class and some award-winning, to cater to business and leisure travellers.

As of the end 1999, there were 1,404 hotels of different categories in the whole of Malaysia, providing a total of 109,413 rooms. In Kuala Lumpur alone, there were 176 hotels with a total of 24,570 rooms.

Between 1995 and 1999, another 184 hotel properties started operating, adding 33,040 guestrooms. However, the 1997 Asian financial crisis put several hotel projects on hold.

All cities, state capitals and major towns in Malaysia offer international-standard business hotels, including a number of international chain hotels in key

cities, and different classes of budget hotels.

As the government, business and commercial hub of the country, the Klang Valley area of Malaysia, covering Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam and Klang, has the largest number of hotels including the largest number of international chain hotels.

Kuala Lumpur alone has 16 five-star hotels, 13 four-star hotels and 12 three-star hotels out of a total of 62 hotels that have received star rating from the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism.

(Hotels apply to the Ministry for a star rating, which is accorded after inspection based on pre-set benchmarks.)

Situated in the Jalan Sultan Ismail hotel belt in Kuala Lumpur are the Sheraton Imperial, the Shangri-la, the Equatorial, Hilton Kuala Lumpur, Hotel Istana and Park Royal (all five-star properties) and the four-star Concorde and Fairlane.

Visitors who hanker for nostalgia rather than steel and glass might prefer the five-star Carcosa Seri Negara in the Lake Gardens. There is also the two-star Heritage Station Hotel at the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station, a Moorish-architectural city landmark and the two-star Bintang Warisan Hotel with its colonial facade on Jalan Bukit Bintang.

Out of Kuala Lumpur in Seri Kembangan, near Putrajaya, the country's new administrative centre, the five-star Palace Of The Golden Horses has accommodated several heads of state, dignitaries and other VIPs.

The island of Penang offers travellers a choice of city hotel or beach resort accommodation, while Langkawi island has some of the best resorts in the country.

Current room rates for five-star and four-star hotels in Malaysia are among the lowest in the region, which helps make Malaysia a very affordable destination for business and leisure travellers. ●



The resorts in Langkawi

trunk roads, making travelling by car or coach a fast and comfortable experience.

Domestic air travel is well developed in Malaysia and there is an airport in every state capital and the Federal Territory of Labuan. In Kuala Lumpur, domestic flights are available from both the KL International Airport (KLIA) in Sepang and the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang (Subang Airport). While Malaysia Airlines has the widest domestic network, four other smaller airlines, AirAsia, Transmile, Pelangi and Berjaya, provide services mainly to popular tourist destinations not served by the national carrier.

Malaysia Airlines offers flights from both KLIA and Subang Airport to all state capitals and major towns in the country. It flies to Alor Setar, Ipoh, Johor Bahru, Langkawi and Penang on the west coast; Kota Bharu, Kuala Terengganu and Kuantan on the east coast and the Federal Territory of Labuan.

For Sabah, there are direct flights from Kuala Lumpur to Kota Kinabalu, Sibiu, Sandakan and Tawau, the departure point for the famous diving spots off Sipadan and Mabul islands.

For Sarawak, Malaysia Airlines flies to Kuching and Miri from Kuala Lumpur.

From Kota Kinabalu, there are flights to Lahad Datu to access the eco-tourism destination of Danum Valley Conservation Area, to Sandakan for the Sepilok Orangutan Sanctuary and to Semporna, a marine tourism centre. To reach the ancient Mulu Caves (Mulu National Park), there is a flight from Miri to Mulu. Enquiries/reservations: Tel (603) 746-3000 or your nearest Malaysia Airlines offices.

AIRLINES

A designated national airline of Malaysia, AirAsia flies two B737-300 aircraft on scheduled flights from Subang Airport to Kota Kinabalu twice daily, to Kuching every day with an additional flight on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, and twice weekly to Labuan. There are six flights a week to Langkawi.

The airline has also introduced a business class section with the Perdana Lounge at Terminal 3, Subang Airport for business class passengers. AirAsia has ticket counters at all the airports it flies from.

Operating Fokker aircraft from the Subang Airport, Pelangi Airways flies to Ipoh thrice a week, to Kuala Terengganu twice a week and daily to Johor Bahru.

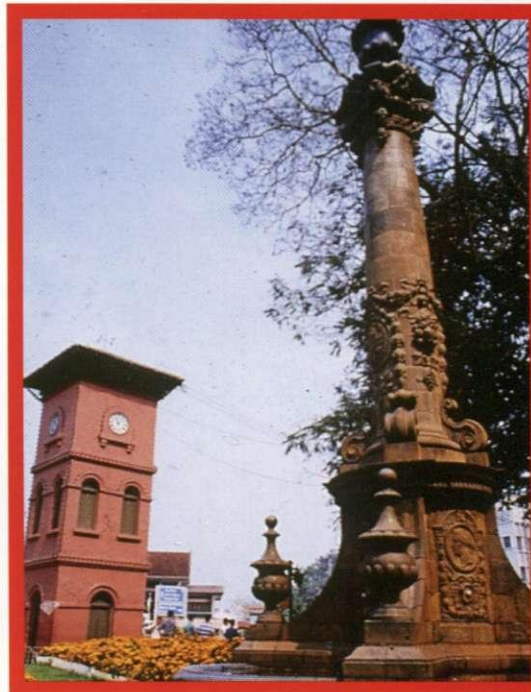
Pelangi also has two daily flights to Kerteh on the east coast, the base for oil exploration activities off Terengganu State coastline, and is the only airline flying there. Pelangi ticket counters are found at all the airports the airline operates from. Enquiries/ticketing: Tel (603) 755 3770, fax. (603) 755 3355.

Berjaya Air is the only airline offering daily scheduled flights from Kuala Lumpur (Subang Airport) to the popular resort island of Tioman (in the South China Sea off coast of Pahang State). Berjaya Air operates the 48-seater DeHavilland Dash 7 aircraft. Flight time to the island is less than 60 minutes. Since Feb last year, it has been operating five weekly scheduled flights to Pangkor Island (Perak) in conjunction with Visit Perak Year 2000. Berjaya Air has a ticket counter at Subang Airport. Enquiries/reservations: Tel. (603) 746 822, fax (603) 746 5637. E-mail: berjayaa@tm.net.my

ROADS

The 847km North South Expressway (NSE), a toll highway, runs the entire length of Peninsular Malaysia, starting at Bukit Kayu Hitam (Kedah State) at the Malaysia-Thai border in the north and ending in Johor Bahru (Johor state), across the causeway from Singapore in the south.

Fully operational in 1994, the NSE traverses a range of terrain, ranging from level land between paddy fields in the northern state of Kedah to rolling and mountainous terrain in the central part of the country, affording a vista of the



Historical Malacca is now only about an hour away from KL by road.

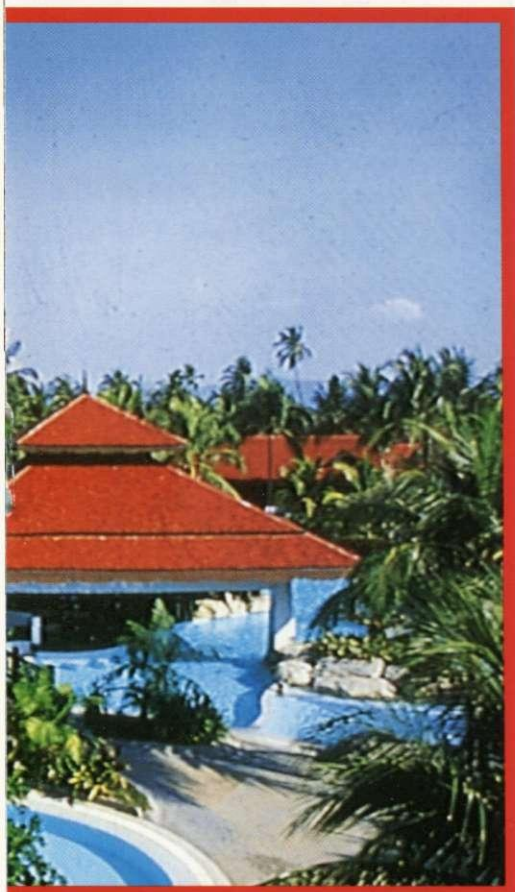
country not available from the air.

Linking the cities and major towns on the west coast of the peninsula, the NSE is a dual four-lane divided highway and in urban areas, there are six lanes, with a design speed of 120 kmh. Driving at a speed of 110 kmh, it takes only about three hours from Kuala Lumpur to Penang, and about three and a half hours to Johor Bahru.

Facilities include overhead bridge restaurants, rest and service areas with food stalls and public toilets located every 60km to 100km along the expressway, and laybys every 25km to 50km. Petrol stations can be found beside the overhead bridge restaurants and at all rest and service areas. At the vista points located at Pedas/Linggi (Negri Sembilan state) and Ipoh, the capital of Perak, there are parking lots, shelters and picnic spots.

PLUSRonda, a 24-hour free service to assist motorists, handles accidents and general traffic management on the NSE, and in the event of a major breakdown, provides towing of selected vehicles to the nearest toll plaza. Emergency telephones (ET) are placed every 2km on either side of the NSE, and calls are directed to the nearest Region Communication Centre of the expressway. The Traffic Monitoring Centre, operating 24 hours a day, handles all enquiries on the PLUSLINE (tel: 03 2692-0000).

For travellers in the northern part of Peninsular Malaysia, the 79km EastWest Highway provides a scenic link between the highly urbanised west coast and the slowerpaced East Coast. Exiting the NSE at Kuala Kangsar, a road links to Grik in northern Perak from where the EastWest Highway crosses the mountainous region of the central Main Range to enter Kelantan State at Jeli.●



wi island in the north are among the best.

Golfing paradise



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BUSINESS DAY

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MALAYSIA has national parks for nature lovers, sun, sea and sand, mountains and hills. Not to mention some of the friendliest people in the world.

And for those who love to play golf, Malaysia has more than 150 18-hole courses to choose from. A good number of these courses, spread throughout the country, are of championship quality and offer the ultimate golfing challenge.

Some of these courses have been designed by world-renowned names like Jack Nicklaus, Ronald Fream, Robert Trent Jones Jr, Graham Marsh and Rodger Davis, to name a few.

Each of these courses presents a variety of challenges. The tremendous variety available makes Malaysia a golfing paradise par excellence.

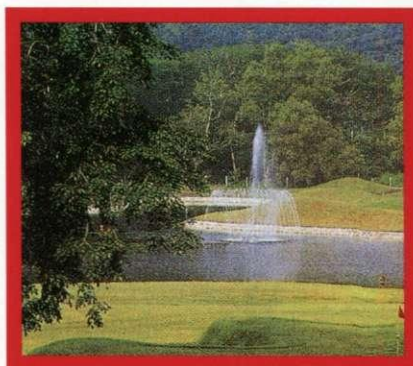
The courses welcome visitors, who can play a round and enjoy the facilities and amenities available.

Selangor state has the highest number of golf courses in the country. The state is a fine example of nature and modern industrialisation in harmony with each other.

At the state capital, Shah Alam, is the famous Blue Mosque, largest in the region and an attraction in its own right.

Templer Park Country Club

This Jumbo Ozaki-designed 18-hole championship course is set against the towering Takun and Anak Takun mountains. It has established itself as



Templer Park Country Club ... fine golfing pleasure in a beautiful location.

one of the best courses in the country and hosted the 1995 Malaysian Open.

The first nine is generally flat but features long holes.

The second nine is considered the tougher of the two, with the 18th an especially difficult test of golfing skill.

Fast facts:

Green fees	RM 80
Weekday guests	RM150
Caddy fees:	
4 sharing member/guests	RM10/12
2 sharing member/guests	RM18/20
Non-sharing	RM40
Buggy	RM30

How to get there:

On the Kuala Lumpur-Ipoh trunk road, before reaching Templer Park and with Bukit Takun in full view, turn right after the Shell station and then turn left at the signboard to get to the club.

Staffield Country Resort

Among the best courses in the country, Staffield Country Resort offers a quality golfing experience that has few peers.

It is located about 45 minutes' drive from Kuala Lumpur along the picturesque old trunk road to Seremban. Drive past Kajang, Semenyih and Beranang and you'll arrive at Staffield.

Besides golf, Staffield offers a delightful array of country resort facilities aimed at pleasing one and all.

The unique Tudor-style clubhouse houses a restaurant, lounge, an array of functions and entertainment facilities and a shopping arcade.

Non-golfers can try the tennis and squash courts or have a dip in the swimming pool or wading pool for the little ones.

A gymnasium with sauna and jacuzzi round up the host of facilities available at Staffield.

Fast facts:

Green fees(guests/visitors)	
Weekdays:	RM80
Weekdays:	RM150
Caddy fees:	RM15
Buggies:	RM40 ●

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NEW BUSINESS DAY

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35 Baht

STOCK MARKETS

	Close	Prev	Change
BSEI	324.50	327.51	-3.01
Aut	3,261.3	3,277.60	-16.6
FIN	15,672.26	15,609.40	+62.72
FTSE	427.91	442.77	-12.86
Nikkei	13,422.83	13,158.23	+264.60
Nikkei	596.47	591.57	+4.90
Malaysia	724.61	719.67	+4.94
HK	2,007.62	2,001.00	+6.62
NZ	1,696.90	1,664.84	+32.06
Sing	3,370.32	3,362.34	+7.98
Taiwan	5,809.84	5,769.00	+40.84
Shanghai	79.23	79.00	+0.23

February 9 Close

Dow Jones	10,140.55	10,146.72	-6.17
Nasdaq	2,542.20	2,627.80	-85.60

BAHT UPDATE

Bank	TT	Neto	TT	Neto
TTB	42.36	41.30	42.10	42.62
TMS	42.35	41.30	42.63	42.65
HTB	42.30	41.40	42.50	42.60
WBL	42.30	41.30	42.45	42.15
BAI	42.32	41.32	42.20	42.60

BRIEFS

Italian-Thai moves on debt

ITALIAN-THAI Development, the country's largest construction company, has announced that it plans to sell half of its stake in a local cement-producing firm to help pay 5.6 billion baht in overdue debt.

Trade deficit sparks worries

THAILAND should speed up its search for new markets for agricultural products, Commerce Minister Adulthasakul said, commenting on January's US\$792 million trade deficit, low first in 40 months.

January imports totaled \$5.2 billion, while exports stood at \$4.4 billion. The deficit was due mainly to Boeing aircraft imported by THAI at a cost of \$160 million.

Last week, Somsakul Engtrakul, permanent secretary to the Finance Ministry, said the deficit was indicative of the stagnant economy in the US, Thailand's main export market.

Meanwhile, Supavard Santhana, executive vice president of Siam Cement, said the recession in the US would drive investment funds into Thailand, which offer more attractive yields.

He said that investors should adopt a wait-and-see approach to economic measures under the new government, adding that they should closely monitor its performance as well as the external situation, especially the US situation.

The trade deficit was a significant setback for Thailand's economic recovery, he said, adding that current conditions made it difficult to forecast long-term movement trends on the stock exchange of Thailand.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Somchai Jongsakul said that the prime minister was concerned about shrinking exports and urged relevant agencies to find solutions aimed at stimulating domestic spending.

The National Economic and Social Development Board was assigned to formulate plans to encourage spending, Somchai said, adding that the state budget might be used to encourage investment.

A source at the Finance Ministry said deputy Finance Minister Vachiraporn Kattakul is likely to be put in charge of the former debt moratorium program and oversee operations at the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives.

In related news, Minister of Industry Surin Jongsakul said he will hold discussions with representatives of domestic industries about the low plant utilization capacity.

The Ministry of Industry plans to help the industrial sector to boost plant utilization since most of the sector is operating at only 50 percent of capacity, he said.

"As a result they cannot afford to pay their debts, which is why banks are having problems with non-performing loans."



TRACKING THAILAND'S IMPORTS AND EXPORTS



Govt insists it will avoid 'excessive spending' concerns

THE NEW government will not allow the budget deficit to grow next year to allay investors' concerns about rising public debt, an official said.

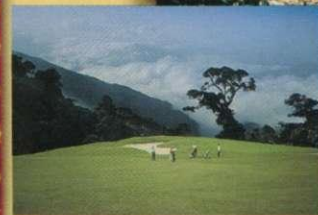
The government plans to keep the budget deficit at about 105 billion baht, the same as this year's projection, Budget Director Poomsanit Piyasakul said after meeting with investors.

All those ahead were killed in the crash, which occurred at 4:45 am (9:45 am local time) at the airport. The plane had a full crew and had a three-hour flight.

"According to preliminary information supplied by the exit toll to the airport, the plane was from the province of Chiang Mai, and the passengers were mostly students and young people."

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